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Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Nineteenth session

Summary record (partial)* of the 373rd meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 22 February 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Degener

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by parties to the Convention under article 35 (*continued*)

Initial report of Slovenia (CRPD/C/SVN/1; CRPD/C/SVN/Q/1 and CRPD/C/SVN/Q/1/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Slovenia took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Vuk** (Slovenia), highlighting developments since the submission of her country's initial report (CRPD/C/SVN/1), said that the Council for Persons with Disabilities, a tripartite, independent body headed by a representative of a disability organization, had been established in 2014 as a consultative forum on issues of disability policy and a monitoring body for implementation of the Convention. In early 2014, the Government had adopted a new Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014–2021, comprising 13 fundamental objectives and 91 measures drawn up in consultation with representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities with a view to protecting, promoting and guaranteeing full and equal enjoyment of the human rights of persons with disabilities. In 2013, the National Assembly had adopted a resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme 2013–2020, which aimed, inter alia, to reduce poverty, enhance the social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups and improve the availability and accessibility of services and programmes. The resolution included specific quantitative objectives for reducing the number of adults in whole-day institutional care and preventing further institutionalization.

3. Discrimination on the basis of disability was expressly prohibited under the Protection against Discrimination Act adopted in 2016. The Act had established the Advocate of the Principle of Equality as an independent authority to deal with cases of discrimination, provide independent assistance to persons who had experienced discrimination, file lawsuits and participate in judicial proceedings. Following the recent amendments to the National Assembly Elections Act, all polling stations must now be accessible to persons with disabilities, and persons with disabilities were eligible for postal voting. In 2017, the National Assembly had adopted the Personal Assistance Act, which regulated the exercise of the right to personal assistance.

4. A number of projects had been carried out to raise public awareness, combat stereotypes, prejudice and harmful practices, and promote positive perceptions of persons with disabilities. The "We Can Do It" project had been carried out in 2014 and 2015 in cooperation with the Association of Students with Disabilities, the Urban Planning Institute and the Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Providers to promote equality and combat discrimination, raise awareness of disability issues and better inform persons with disabilities of their rights. A library had been set up for persons who were blind or partially sighted to make materials available in accessible formats. Efforts were being made in the development of accessible tourism; Premiki, a specialized travel agency for persons with disabilities, had been awarded the United Nations World Tourism Organization Ulysses Prize for Excellence in the Creation and Dissemination of Knowledge, and the Slovene capital, Ljubljana, had won the European Commission Access City Award three times for its approach to accessibility.

5. The Convention had been translated into accessible formats for persons with visual and hearing impairments and persons with intellectual disabilities, and had been published on the Ministry's website. Civil society organizations had been given the opportunity to submit comments and proposals for the drafting of the State party's initial report, which had been discussed by the Council for Persons with Disabilities prior to its adoption. Slovenia adhered to the principle of "nothing about us without us", and relevant regulations were always prepared in cooperation with persons with disabilities.

6. **Mr. Ruskus** (Country Rapporteur) said that the adoption of the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act, the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities and the Personal Assistance Act were welcome developments. Nevertheless, persons with disabilities continued to face considerable challenges in enjoying their right to

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live on an equal basis with others in Slovenia. He was deeply concerned that the State party had not made the shift from a social protection model to a human rights model of disability and that disability policies, legislation and practice were based on a medical and charitable approach rather than on equality and non-discrimination. Legislation, policies and programmes were poorly harmonized with the Convention, and some of the definitions of disability were derogatory, pointing out the "unfitness" of persons with disabilities for regular education, independent life and work. Negative societal attitudes towards persons with disabilities persisted, and there was a lack of awareness of their capabilities and rights, especially with regard to persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities. The lack of understanding of the State party's obligations under the Convention — which was perhaps due to its incorrect translation into the Slovene language — was a major concern when it came to administrative and legislative decision-making at the national and municipal levels. There continued to be a parallel education system — specialized and mainstream — for children with disabilities, rather than inclusive education, and there were low expectations with regard to the capacities of children with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities. Legal provisions allowed persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities to be deprived of their right to exercise legal capacity and did not provide for supported decision-making. The process of deinstitutionalization was very slow, and hundreds of persons with disabilities were still living in institutions.

7. As the State party was a member of the Council of Europe, he wished to draw the delegation's attention to the Committee's letter to the Committee on Bioethics of the Council of Europe on the subject of the draft Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (Oviedo Convention) concerning the protection of human rights and dignity of persons with mental disorders with regard to involuntary placement and involuntary treatment. He also wished to point out that, under article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, States parties had an obligation to refrain from engaging in any act or practice that was inconsistent with the Convention, including in the framework of regional organizations of which they were members.

Articles 1–10

8. **Mr. Alsaif** said that he wished to know whether persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, were involved in the development of laws, public policies and plans of action in all sectors that affected them. He would be grateful for information on the numbers of children with disabilities benefiting from universal access to early intervention services and how those services distinguished between diseases and impairment.

9. **Mr. Lovászy** said that he would like clarification of the various categories of persons with disabilities and the financial support available to them. In particular, the delegation might comment on the financial support provided by the State to war veterans with disabilities as compared with that provided to other persons with disabilities and explain the reasoning behind any differences in status or treatment. While it was understandable that war veterans who had acquired disabilities in the line of duty should receive special recognition from the State, it must be ensured that there was no discrimination against non-veterans with the same types of disability.

10. He would welcome an explanation of the statement in paragraph 4 of the State party's replies to the list of issues (CRPD/C/SVN/Q/1/Add.1) concerning the introduction of definitions of disability derived from the human rights model. He would also be grateful for clarification of paragraph 7 of the replies, according to which a disability organization was a "society or association of societies operating in the public interest in the field of disabled care". Were there no other organizations of persons with disabilities carrying out activities related to legal aid, reasonable accommodation or awareness-raising, for example? He would like confirmation that failure to offer reasonable accommodation was considered a form of discrimination in the State party and details of the system of financial support for companies to cover the cost of reasonable accommodation in the workplace.

11. Regarding the process of deinstitutionalization, he would appreciate information on any initiatives to encourage the adoption of children with disabilities deprived of parental care and statistics on the number of children with disabilities adopted since ratification of

the Convention. He wished to know whether the State party intended to enhance the web accessibility of schools and educational institutions, and how the provisions of the European Union directive on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies would be applied.

12. **Mr. Tatić** said that he would like updated information on the funding available to ensure the effective implementation of the second Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities. It would also be interesting to learn what impact austerity measures had had on the rights of persons with disabilities. He wished to know what measures were taken to ensure the accessibility of safe houses and victim support services for women and girls with disabilities, and whether any training was provided to combat prejudice against women with psychosocial disabilities in that context. He would be interested to hear more about sanctions for failure to comply with accessibility standards, including the number of cases in which such sanctions had been applied. In the light of reports that some renovation work involved merely cosmetic improvements rather than the removal of architectural barriers, perhaps the delegation would comment on how accessibility standards were applied to the renovation of existing buildings. Lastly, he would be interested to hear how Slovenia was using European Union structural funds to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities.

13. **Mr. Ishikawa** asked whether the State party intended to take additional measures to promote accessibility, including through the introduction of a public procurement policy.

14. **Mr. Chaker** said that he would appreciate further information about awareness-raising campaigns targeting the general public, organizations of persons with disabilities and the media and aimed at fostering a positive image of persons with disabilities.

15. **Mr. Buntan** said that he would like to know more about what had been done to ensure that disability-based discrimination was completely prohibited. Statistics on any cases of such discrimination brought before Slovene courts and information on the remedies awarded in those cases would be useful. It would also be helpful to know what steps had been taken to ensure that educational institutions adhered to the provisions of the bill on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications, particularly given the key role those establishments could play in raising public awareness of disability issues.

16. **Mr. Martin** asked whether persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, had participated in the planning and implementation of national disability awareness-raising campaigns. He also asked whether the Council for Persons with Disabilities included persons with intellectual disabilities. Lastly, he would like information about the training on disability rights available for government officials tasked with implementing the provisions of the Convention in Slovenia.

17. **Mr. You** Liang, noting that the Committee had received reports indicating that some translations of disability-related terminology into the Slovene language did not reflect the spirit of the Convention, asked whether the Government intended to review those translations and make any needed corrections. He would like to know what efforts had been made to support the economic empowerment of women with disabilities and ensure their financial independence. He also wished to know what policies and measures had been adopted to protect children with disabilities against violence and ensure that they had access to high quality, inclusive education.

18. **Mr. Kabue** said that he would like information about the activities of the committee responsible for monitoring the second Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities (2014–2021) and about the impact of that committee's work. It would also be useful to know whether there was a mechanism for coordinating the work of the various ministries responsible for implementing the Convention. Lastly, he wondered to what extent women with disabilities were involved in efforts to promote gender equality and whether their specific concerns were reflected in national gender equality policies.

19. **Mr. Langvad** said that he wished to know whether there were plans to amend national legislation that defined disability from a purely medical perspective. He wondered to what extent organizations of persons with disabilities were participating in efforts to

incorporate a human rights approach to disability into domestic law and whether such organizations were able to register as organizations representing persons with disabilities.

20. **Mr. Kim** Hyung Shik asked whether the denial of reasonable accommodation was considered a form of disability-based discrimination in the State party and whether the Protection Against Discrimination Act included provisions on intersectional and multiple discrimination. Further information regarding the outcomes of the Accessible Slovenia Strategy would be welcome. It would be particularly useful to know more about the mechanisms for ensuring compliance and sanctioning violations of national building standards and accessibility requirements. He would also welcome information on any measures taken to overcome the physical obstructions and communication barriers encountered by persons with disabilities.

21. **The Chair** said she would appreciate information on whether anti-discrimination legislation expressly prohibited intersectional and multiple discrimination, particularly in respect of Roma women, refugees, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons with disabilities.

22. **Mr. Ruskus** asked what steps had been taken to prohibit the corporal punishment of children, including those with disabilities. He also wished to know what measures were envisaged to accelerate the implementation of the Convention in the State party.

The meeting was suspended at 3.50 p.m. and resumed at 4.20 p.m.

23. **Ms. Vuk** (Slovenia) said that her Government was firmly committed to promoting a human rights model of disability and was in the process of amending legislation that continued to reflect a medical approach. All new legislation was based on a human rights approach. The Convention had been translated into Slovene language in partnership with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations and had been harmonized with other translations of the text. The Government recognized that it was not sufficient to put in place a legal framework to protect the rights of persons with disabilities; it was also essential to raise public awareness of disability issues. It had therefore carried out a number of awareness-raising campaigns. Efforts had also been made to inform persons with disabilities of their rights and of how to assert them.

24. **Mr. Uršič** (Karitas Slovenia) said that, pursuant to the 2002 Organizations of Persons with Disabilities Act, the Government must consult such organizations prior to the adoption of new national legislation. All forms of discrimination based on disability had been prohibited under national legislation, most notably the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act. While that Act did require adaptations to facilitate access for persons with disabilities, it did not expressly identify the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of disability-based discrimination.

25. National legislation had evolved over time, and the differing definitions of and approaches to disability in existing legislation reflected that fact. A tripartite body chaired by a person with disabilities was responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention. With regard to awareness-raising, the Government had invited a group of students with disabilities to meet with parliamentarians and public officials to share their experiences of disability and heighten awareness of the barriers facing persons with disabilities in all areas of life.

26. **Ms. Čobal** (Slovenia), responding to the questions regarding the legal basis for preventing intersectional discrimination, said that the Protection Against Discrimination Act enacted in 2016 prohibited all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on disability. The Office of the Advocate of the Principle of Equality would publish a report in April 2018 on the 14 discrimination cases dealt with in 2017.

27. Slovenia had achieved one of the highest rates of gender equality in the world. The principle of gender equality was respected in all legislation, measures and policies. A safe house had been established with accommodations for women with disabilities, including sign language interpreting for deaf women. Deaf women could also send a text message to the emergency number, 112. Individual services were provided for women with intellectual, psychosocial and all other types of disabilities. Women with disabilities participated in the formulation of gender-related policies and legislation. They had also been involved in

developing the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2020. Special attention was given to promoting employment and combating the threat of poverty among women with disabilities.

28. **Mr. Ferenc** (Slovenia) said that the police took vigorous action to address cases of violence, including sexual violence, against persons with disabilities, since they were a particularly vulnerable group. Special training was provided for the investigators who dealt with such cases, most of whom were women. The police officers who gathered preliminary information to protect women and arrest perpetrators were also, in most cases, women.

29. **Ms. Čobal** (Slovenia) said that the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child had been incorporated into the Family Code. The interests of all children, regardless of their personal circumstances or other characteristics, were taken into account. The Act Amending the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act adopted in 2016 prohibited corporal punishment. Slovenia had also launched positive parenting programmes and projects, which provided training for parents and sought to eliminate corporal punishment in all cases. Slovenia was a party to the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption. As very few children were available for adoption in Slovenia, some children, including children with disabilities, were adopted pursuant to a cooperation agreement with Bulgaria and the Czech Republic.

30. **Ms. Vuk** (Slovenia) added that, of 40 recently adopted children, between 20 and 30 had been adopted from abroad and a few had been children with disabilities.

31. **Ms. Sarajlić** (Slovenia) said that in 2016 the Organization and Financing of Education Act had been amended to include an article guaranteeing a safe and stimulating learning environment in kindergartens and other educational establishments for children and adolescents with special needs. It prohibited corporal punishment and any form of violence based on sexual orientation, cultural origin, religion, ethnicity or other grounds. Training courses for staff, including seminars on violence prevention, were based on projects financed by the European Social Fund and supported by the National Education Institute.

32. **Ms. Čobal** (Slovenia) said that Slovenia had one of the lowest neonatal mortality rates in the world, thanks to the support provided for family planning and during pregnancy and delivery. As regular medical examinations were conducted by paediatricians up to the eighteenth month after birth and nurses regularly visited infants' homes, any developmental irregularities were identified at an early stage. Older children also received regular check-ups. When irregularities were detected, the children were referred to outpatient units that had been established throughout the country; 100 per cent of children had access to early interventions. With a view to improving the standard of care provided, the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs Act had been enacted in 2017. The Act provided for comprehensive treatment and a further expansion of the treatment network with effect from 2019.

33. **Ms. Šoln Vrbinc** (Slovenia) said that all children entering kindergarten were screened by a placement committee, and those who were identified as having special needs received appropriate accommodations and assistance. According to recent data concerning children with disabilities, 9.4 per cent had intellectual impairments, 11.4 per cent were blind or had visual impairments, 41.6 per cent were deaf or had hearing and/or speech impairments, 8.4 per cent had physical impairments, 3.2 per cent had emotional or behavioural disorders, 9 per cent had long-term illnesses and 26 per cent had multiple disabilities. The Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs Act provided for intersectional treatment by a team of experts from various fields, overseen by a coordinator who would serve as a liaison with parents and forge links with kindergartens and social care services. Individualized plans would be prepared for the families concerned, and parents would be supported by an NGO representative who had experienced a similar situation.

34. Children were also entitled, pursuant to the Placement of Children with Special Needs Act, to receive additional expert assistance or a tailor-made programme. Most children attended mainstream kindergartens or schools; only a small proportion, particularly

children who had intellectual impairments or required comprehensive care, were placed in specialized establishments for children with special needs.

35. **Ms. Vuk** (Slovenia) said that the "We Can Do It" awareness-raising project had helped decision makers to develop an effective approach to accessibility. Organizations of persons with disabilities had also participated in other awareness-raising projects run by the Government, in line with the principle of "nothing about us without us". The department of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities that was responsible for disability issues was tasked with coordinating relevant legislation and action to meet reporting obligations under the Convention. Ministries conferred with each other before the adoption of any legislation in order to delete any provisions that contravened the Convention. The Council for Persons with Disabilities, which monitored the implementation of the Convention, had been allocated funds under the current budget and was provided with technical and administrative support by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

36. **Ms. Močnik** (Slovenia) said that kindergartens and other educational establishments would not be required to comply with the provisions of the bill on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications, which was soon to be adopted, because it would impose a disproportionate burden on educational personnel. All data regarding the administrative functions of such establishments were accessible on the eGovernment portal, which complied with the applicable accessibility standards. One aim of the new law would be to raise awareness and provide training, in cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities, for website and mobile application providers. The website of the Municipality of Ljubljana, the website and portal of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the portal of the Financial Administration of the Republic of Slovenia were already accessible. With regard to public procurement, accessibility was a precondition for the rental of business premises. Provision had also been made for inspections and the imposition of sanctions.

37. **Ms. Koc** (Slovenia) said that a new construction law would enter into force on 1 June 2018, replacing the previous Construction Act, which had focused on public facilities. The new law would also be applicable to residential buildings and would require the removal of access barriers. The Construction Inspection Service would oversee compliance with the legislation. According to the Service's report for 2015, a total of 222 buildings had been inspected during the design or construction phase or immediately after their entry into service. Sanctions had been imposed for anomalies in about 50 facilities, which had been ordered to remedy the defects. The buildings had been inspected again in 2017 and all had been found to have eliminated barriers identified.

38. **Mr. Drašler** (Slovenia), responding to the question concerning the use of European structural funds, said that European transport policy focused on sustainability and mobility. All Slovene municipalities were required to participate in European Mobility Week, which was supported by the European Development Fund. Enhancing accessibility was one of its basic goals. The park-and-ride system was supported in all municipalities. Public tenders were published to finance sustainable mobility projects.

39. **Mr. Uršič** (Karitas Slovenia) said that national television and radio stations were required to ensure the accessibility of their main broadcasts, either by means of subtitles or though sign language interpreters. Their websites also complied with accessibility standards for persons with visual and hearing impairments. The sites contained archives of broadcasts of relevance to persons with disabilities. Sign language interpretation was provided for all Government press conferences and for debates between candidates during election campaigns.

40. As mentioned earlier, Ljubljana had won several European accessibility prizes. Under a project designed to assess urban friendliness to people with disabilities, municipalities had been analysed with the cooperation of persons with disabilities and public officials. Strategies and action plans had then been drawn up and had been adopted by municipal councils. Actions taken to improve accessibility included the construction of disability-friendly parking lots and walkways and the installation of audible signals at pedestrian crossings. More than 20 municipalities had participated in the project.

41. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities had launched the European Union Disability Card, which enabled persons with disabilities, regardless of nationality, to enjoy rights and benefits such as access to museums and cultural events and public transport discounts. Slovenia had been one of the first European Union countries to join the Disability Card initiative and more than 1,000 cards had already been issued.

42. Every effort was made to ensure that funds allocated to activities for the benefit of persons with disabilities were not affected by the budget cuts introduced during the economic and financial crisis. However, there had been some slight cutbacks in certain allowances. On the other hand, allowances for persons with intellectual disabilities had increased. War veterans with disabilities were accorded differential treatment pursuant to legislation that had been adopted some years earlier; however, under the current rights-based approach, support was provided without discrimination to persons with disabilities on the basis of their particular needs.

43. **Mr. Drašler** (Slovenia) said that the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act addressed the accessibility of bus and train transport. As raising the funds required to render rail transport fully accessible presented quite a challenge, the deadline had been set at December 2025. As less investment was required for bus transport accessibility, the deadline was December 2020.

44. **Ms. Velić** (Slovenia) said that the Human Rights Ombudsman Act had been amended in 2017 to provide for the establishment of a council for human rights which would be tasked with raising awareness of human rights, including those of persons with disabilities. Members of organizations of persons with disabilities would be represented in the council.

45. **Ms. Vuk** (Slovenia) said that a fund had been established to assist companies in covering the costs of reasonable accommodation. The Government planned to conduct an awareness-raising campaign during the current year in order to encourage employers to recruit more persons with disabilities. There was a special procedure for guaranteeing the representation of organizations of persons with disabilities. Nineteen organizations were recognized and participated in monitoring the enforcement of disability rights and in training programmes in the education, justice and public administration sectors.

Articles 11–20

46. **Mr. Rukhledev** said he would like information about the status of sign language in Slovene legislation, specifically in connection with the principle of access to justice. He would also like to know whether deaf persons were entitled to the services of sign language interpreters during investigations, court cases and police questioning.

47. **Mr. Chaker** asked whether coordination mechanisms existed in the risk prevention system and among organizations of persons with disabilities for emergency situations, such as earthquakes. He also wished to know whether shelters and assistive devices were available for persons with disabilities during risk and emergency situations, and whether information on disasters was available in accessible formats.

48. **Mr. Buntan** said that he was not convinced that requiring compliance with the forthcoming legislation on accessibility of websites and mobile applications would impose a disproportionate burden on educational establishments, since they were already responsible for providing accessible information in the area of education. Given the crucial role played by web accessibility and mobile applications in education, he doubted whether plans to promote inclusive education would be successful if schools failed to meet accessibility standards.

49. Noting that the State party considered that guardianship no longer entailed the removal of legal capacity, he enquired about steps to move from substitute to supported decision-making in order to ensure that the legal capacity of persons with disabilities was protected and remained unrestricted. He commended the measures taken to afford protection in situations of risk and emergency and ensure the access of deaf persons to emergency number 112. He would welcome information about the State party's progress in

implementing a comprehensive plan for disaster risk reduction in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. He would also like to know to what extent persons with disabilities and their representative organizations had been involved in the planning and implementation of the disaster risk reduction activities.

50. **Mr. Langvad** asked what strategies the State party had adopted for developing indicators and collecting information on the deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities. He would also like to hear about the State's strategies and timetable for deinstitutionalization and for ensuring that persons with disabilities had access to appropriate and affordable housing and community support.

51. **Mr. Martin** asked whether training in supported decision-making was provided for families and professionals. He also wished to know whether persons with disabilities were sterilized without their consent in Slovenia and, if so, what action was being taken by the State party to prevent forced sterilization. In addition, he would like information about measures to protect persons with disabilities living in institutions, especially from abusive practices and medical treatment without their consent.

52. **Mr. Alsaif** requested an update on the number of complaints filed concerning torture, violence or abuse perpetrated against persons with disabilities and their outcomes.

53. **Mr. Lovászy** asked whether the delegation could provide statistics on the number and percentage of persons with disabilities who could be reached by emergency services in an accessible manner. He wondered whether the Civil Protection and Disaster Relief Administration regularly consulted organizations of persons with disabilities when updating its protocols and manuals. He was also curious to know how the infrared transmitter units installed in courts were used by persons wearing different kinds of hearing aids, whether the technology was based on a standardized platform and whether other options were available for persons with hearing impairments. Noting that the national preventive mechanism reportedly monitored the living conditions of persons in social care institutions, he asked whether the mechanism was financed in a manner that guaranteed its independence from the Government and whether any NGOs were involved in its activities. Lastly, he wondered whether the Committee's general comment No. 2 on accessibility had been translated into the Slovene language and whether the advice therein would be used to enhance accessibility in the justice system.

54. **Mr. You** Liang asked whether the Council for Persons with Disabilities included persons with disabilities among its members. He also enquired what concrete measures, including financial allocations, had been taken to encourage scientific and innovative research on assistive devices that could improve quality of life for persons with disabilities.

55. **Mr. Tatić** said that he would like to know how the State party ensured that the lottery funds that were used to finance the assistance offered by organizations of persons with disabilities were administered in a manner that guaranteed non-interference by the State. He would welcome updated information on how Constitutional Court Decision No. U-I-146/07 on the accessibility of courts was being implemented in practice. It would also be useful to know the amount of budgetary funds allocated for the planned accessibility improvements in 2018 and the number of courts that would be rendered more accessible. In addition, he would be interested in hearing how European Union structural funds had been used to finance support services for independent living, especially personal assistance, and how the State party ensured that the funds were not invested in maintaining existing institutions. In that connection, he wondered whether the Committee's general comment No. 5 on the right to independent living had been translated into the Slovene language.

56. **Mr. Pyaneandee** asked how the State party proposed to implement the concept of procedural and age-appropriate accommodation in order to empower persons with disabilities to participate in the justice system, including as judges and lawyers. He also wished to know how many persons with disabilities participated in the system and what action was being taken to eliminate cumbersome procedures. He commended the research undertaken on women with disabilities who had been subjected to violence. However, the research had not addressed the issue of violence or abuse perpetrated against women, especially women with psychosocial disabilities, who lived in institutions. He wondered whether there were any plans for research on that subject.

57. **The Chair** noted that the Family Code that had been adopted in 2017 and would enter into force on 1 January 2019 replaced the previous system of prolonged parental rights with guardianship for persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. She would like to know what measures would be taken to put in place a supported decision-making regime in line with the Convention and the Committee's general comment No. 1. She would also like to know whether Slovenia supported the draft Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine concerning the protection of human rights and dignity of persons with mental disorders with regard to involuntary placement and involuntary treatment. If so, would the State party consider withdrawing its support, since the draft contravened article 14 of the Convention?

58. **Mr. Ruskus**, referring to the concluding observations of the Committee against Torture on the State party's third periodic report to that body (CAT/C/SVN/CO/3), said that he was concerned about the practice of involuntary restraint and treatment of persons with psychosocial disabilities in psychiatric institutions and the lack of independent monitoring bodies to ensure the proper implementation of safeguards. The Committee against Torture had also expressed concern about unacceptable use of electroconvulsive therapy in psychiatric hospitals. He would welcome a comment from the delegation in that regard. He would also like to hear the delegation's response to information provided by the Human Rights Ombudsman on the involuntary treatment of persons with psychosocial disabilities in social and mental care institutions and their placement in secure wards without their consent. Noting with concern that the Mental Health Act allowed for involuntary internment and treatment of persons with psychosocial disabilities, he asked what progress had been made in ensuring that a rights-based approach was adopted with respect to the liberty and security of persons with psychosocial disabilities in Slovenia.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 5.35 p.m.